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At last you smell the war-smoke, with knit brow,  
Mustache ferocious ! 'Tis the skirmish now  
Before the on-rush!—Coaches, do you say?  
Ah, yes ; no doubt some bridegroom's cortége gay  
Bound for the Sainte-Chapelle across the way.

And music? Half I think I know the maid  
Who'll wear the orange-wreath in that parade.  
It's yours to play.—Or have you lost your zest?  
Of course you wonder how the bride is drest!  
What say you that we stroll in with the rest?

Us they seek out?—Why, merry mates, good-day !  
Gustave, your colonel, who gives me away.  
Your arm, please, Colonel. We must go in state.  
The game's done.—Like a soldier face your fate!  
I play the bishop's crosier—and checkmate !

GEORGE HOUGHTON.

## AN ART ROOM.

In proportion as a higher culture is banishing the old weakness and passion for large instead of home-like houses, and simplicity and chastity are being substituted for flashy exterior ornamentation, so in the decoration of the interior of American houses the same changes are noticeable, and warm and cheerful colors are found taking the place of meretricious and glaring designs, which attract only by the bizarre effects that they produce, and leave behind them no impression of harmony and completeness. It is the fashion to date this renais-

sance in decoration back to our Centennial year; but, although the great object-lesson which was then set up in our midst had an effect in influencing our artistic taste, the true reason is undoubtedly to be found in the working out of the process of natural development. The changes which have taken place in our methods of education, freedom from the tyrannical rule of precedent and tradition, an earnest desire to train the eye and the hand as well as the purely mental faculties, and by that technical training to direct into the



MESSRS. BAILEY, BANKS & BIDDLE'S NEW ART ROOM.

channels of the various arts and industries the activities of intellect which were at one time allowed to operate chiefly in literature, in science, and in utilitarian inventions, have all had a share in raising the standard of household art and decoration, and in making the dwellings even of those not wealthy, but belonging to the great producing classes, homes in the truest sense of the word.

It has been said that if a man wishes to gain some knowledge of a language other than his own he can do so simply by reading and re-reading the pages of one book written in that particular tongue, so that in the end their meaning sinks into his mind and he begins to comprehend somewhat of their significance. It may also be safely said that a knowledge of art can be gained after the same fashion, and without the education of the schools. A constant contemplation of great statues and pictures, of marvellously moulded bronzes, or of porcelains the tints and textures of which range from Tyrian purple to the delicate beauty of the rose, and from the iridescent blue of the sky after rain to the changing green of grasses and of leaves, must have an effect in developing the color-sensations, in increasing their activity, and in preparing the eye for a better

realization of what constitutes beauty and harmony. Looked at in this light, the tastefully arranged windows of every store, each exhibition of painting and sculpture, and even the casual glimpse which the passer-by may snatch of a well-lighted interior, with its warmth and richness of color, the artistic disposition of its furniture, and the harmonious juxtaposition of dissimilar things which blend by contrast, is a lesson which will prove valuable, not in creating, but in widening our knowledge of color-effects and tones.

The natural weakness of almost every one who first begins to attempt the carrying out of any plan of interior decoration is to overcrowd, just as a young and ambitious poet will burden his lines with a redundancy of metaphor or imagery, forgetting that real effect can be reached more by delicate and subtle suggestions than by direct appeals either to the eye or to the brain. The danger in succumbing to this weakness lies in the fact that the contrasts thus produced are apt to be too sharp and well defined, instead of having the appearance of gradually melting, so to speak, into one another and forming a united whole. Any person who has ever analyzed his color-sensations will readily admit that his greatest pleasure is due to

tonings, markings, gradations, and cloudings, which are essentially variations of darkness or of light. When once, therefore, this weakness for overburdening the eye by too much massing of separate and distinctive colors has been overcome, the way is clearer for indulging in the carrying out of bold effects in shading and for exemplifying ideas which, even if striking and original, do not violate any of the well-established and accepted canons of art. And besides this it should never be forgotten that a certain artistic carelessness and naturalness in arrangement will charm more quickly than can any labored effort at detail, and that, to use the lines of old Robert Herrick, such things

" Do more bewitch me than when art  
Is too precise in every part."

No better illustration could be afforded of the soundness of these principles and their application to the decoration and art-furnishing of homes than the art room which now forms a part of the establishment of Messrs. Bailey, Banks & Biddle, in this city; and that innovation on commercial methods is here referred to because of the possibilities which it suggests, and the influence which a careful study of it is certain to have on a rapidly growing artistic taste. The first thing in it which strikes the

eye is that, even with the widely varied character of the surroundings, there has been no attempt to subordinate any one of the art-objects to the other. Each is presented as a type of a certain era or school; but, although thus individualized, all of them are merged into one complete whole, the mechanical side of the plan of design not being apparent, while the artistic side is revealed in its full beauty. The background, on the color and arrangement of which so much depends either in painting or in decoration, has been touched with so skilful a brush and with such harmonious colors that the foreground, while it stands out in bold relief, takes on changing hues from the applied and natural light, and is seen to be rich in the most varied and delightful effects. These color-effects thus harmonized influence the eye just as the color-tones of an exquisitely balanced orchestra affect the ear. In the one case the deep diapason of the brasses and the mellow notes of the woods form a tone-picture, the beauty of which is added to by the delicate broidery of the violins; in the other, the massive beauty of bronze is shaded by the delicate radiance of porcelain, while the rich warmth and glow of rugs and hangings are tempered by the colder and more neutral

colors of the carver and designer in wood and leather. The La Barre vase, with which readers of THE CONNOISSEUR are familiar, is of itself a gem, the softest effects being produced by the painting of the figures on *pâte tendre* instead of on hard glaze, so that the flesh seems almost to yield to the touch of the finger. There are also two porcelain vases, exact reproductions of those which were made for Louis XV. to commemorate the battle of Fontenoy, and which were purchased at the Double sale by the Duc d'Aumale. The paintings on them represent incidents of the battle. Here is a reproduction of a Louis XIV. escritoire, with porcelain panels and Watteau painting; there, a dark-browed Judith in bronze, with a grim resolve on lip and in eye; near by, a cabinet filled with the smallest of designs in ivory and Dresden; plates with a cream-colored and jewelled border, the white centre adorned with a painting as rich in colors as if it came

from the brush of a Turner or a Claude Lorrain; Crown Derby with designs built up on successive layers of gold; Royal Worcester which imitates ivory; onyx, the parti-colored veins in which catch the tints that flash from masses of color glowing on every hand; and, above all, a beauty and a harmony pervading the atmosphere, which come not from a single object, no matter how pure and delicate, but from the suggestion of perfect art which the eye obtains in its grasp of all. If it be argued that the standard here set up is too high to reach, it may be answered truthfully that the higher the ideal the greater the room for development. Nothing but the best and the fittest in art will live; many may only be able to nurture a single rose, while others can build for themselves a conservatory; but it is through an adherence to the principle of beauty that the love of art will grow until it goes with us in our daily duties and makes the world brighter and purer.

JOHN V. HOOD.

## WORDSWORTH.

HE was the voice of all things beautiful  
 In earth, in sky, and in the spirit's heaven;  
 With tones profound enough to sound the dutiful,  
 And tender as a mother's voice at even.

EDWIN R. CHAMPLIN.